

★★★ ELECTION 2020

CHECKING THE FACTS

Examining the claims of Nodaway County Sheriff candidates

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In the last several weeks, The Northwest Missourian has published in-depth political profiles of each candidate running for Nodaway County Sheriff, Republican incumbent Randy Strong and former sheriff Darren White, a Democrat, who have each made claims about their opponent in interviews with The Missourian and in campaign advertisements and social media posts.

White, of course, served as the county's sheriff for two terms after first winning the office in 2008. He was unseated by Strong in 2016 and is seeking the office again after four years of life away from law enforcement and the public eye at large, making this election unique, with two candidates each running for "reelection."

As we aim to do with every topic we report on, The Missourian is committed to bringing accurate, verified reporting to serve as a buffer in what seems to be the most contentious election in Maryville and the county as a whole.

With less than a month until Nov. 3, when area voters will head to the polls — or mail in ballots — to decide who will serve as the face of law enforcement in Nodaway County for the next four years, we hope our reporting might provide unmatched insight on the candidates and their claims. In our best attempt to provide that insight, we fact-checked some key claims each candidate has made about themselves and their opponent. Here is what we found:



“

You have a Sheriff's Office now who, you know, in the first three years of the administration, almost doubled their budget — increased it by almost a million dollars. And my opponent has — I know that he's been on social media saying that that's not true, that it's all grants and things like that. Well, it is true.”

-DARREN WHITE

This is misleading.

While it's accurate the Nodaway County Sheriff's Office, jail and 911 budgets — all of which are overseen by the sheriff — have increased in Strong's tenure, new accounting software accounts for most of the perceived increase in spending. The three budgets grew by a total of \$718,180 from the end of 2016 to the end of last year. But budget records indicate \$579,928 of that increase — more than 80% — can be attributed to new accounting software that shifted line items like employee insurance costs from the county's general fund to the sheriff's office's annual budget. These costs were already being covered by Nodaway County taxpayers and will largely remain the same regardless of who is sheriff.



“

Before I took office, it was 30 years of catering to people's egos, to the point where our radio equipment was falling apart. The consolidated 911 center was a campaign goal of mine, and we did it.”

-RANDY STRONG

This is mostly true.

Forming and implementing what is now called the Northwest Regional Communications Center, which includes dispatch for Maryville Public Safety and Nodaway County was a project in the making for an extended period of time, totaling over 30 years, officially. City leadership, former law enforcement agency heads and administrative issues all led to a drawn-out process for completing the project. During his time in office, Strong worked on issues on the sheriff's office level, allowing for the center to operate within the new Maryville Public Safety Building.



“

I made several campaign promises when I originally ran for office (in 2008). And I fulfilled all of those promises, and one of those promises was that we would have people working around the clock every day of the week, which is something that had never happened here before. And I think that people deserve that. (The sheriff's office has) kind of gone backwards, and they actually have days where they just decide to take (calls), and nobody's really out there on the road.”

-DARREN WHITE

“

(In the previous administration) there was a monthly, if not weekly, physical encounter with inmates and staff.”

-RANDY STRONG

This lacks evidence.

Though multiple sources confirm accounts of physical encounters at the jail, the encounters are not explicitly defined. The physical encounters could include a variety of definitions, and there is a varying amount of time between incidences provided.

This is false.

According to comprehensive scheduling records dating back to January 2017 provided to The Missourian by the sheriff's office, there has been at least one deputy on duty in Nodaway County around the clock since Strong took office. More than 50 pages of timesheets show deputies work 12-hour patrol shifts, most often beginning at either 6 a.m. or 6 p.m. — a change from White's tenure, when deputies worked 10-hour shifts.

More claims fact checked online:

Randy Strong claims the county was being sued over jail operations.

Darren White claims police presence has decreased since Randy Strong stepped in as sheriff.

NWMISSOURINEWS.COM

Maryville to add microbrewery in downtown district

KENDRICK CALFEE

News Editor I @calfee_kc

Maryville is adding a couple more elements to its repertoire of small businesses, both for the average local shopper and beer enthusiasts alike.

Black Pony Brewing Company is a microbrewery coming soon to downtown Maryville. The company is the latest of two small businesses in Maryville getting their start following a lengthy planning and approval process. After months of drafting plans and gathering a team of partners, the owners have begun redevelopment on the building that will house the brewery.

Part owner Stephanie Campbell said the building, which formerly housed a non-denominational church called "The Hub," is being stripped down and given a completely new style and appearance.

The building will be reworked to include a restaurant, bar and its brewery components within the 7,200 square feet the building has to offer. Other features that can be seen in a finished project rendering include outdoor seating and residential components on the second floor.

With \$750,000 in private investment, the project is aiming for completion by April 2021.

"We pulled the trigger on a pretty big investment in the middle of pretty much utter chaos with an election year and a pandemic," Campbell said. "It's been interesting."

For Campbell and her partners, it has been rewarding, but challenging nonetheless, to get plans finalized and create a realistic timeline with COVID-19's continued impact on the greater Maryville area.

With the nuance of process, the brewery has been a year long venture. But the four owners, Stephanie Campbell, her fiance Kent Yount, Brandon Jensen and Jennifer Jensen, were able to sit in the Maryville City Hall chambers Oct. 12 and gain approval from the mayor and council to go forward with the building process.

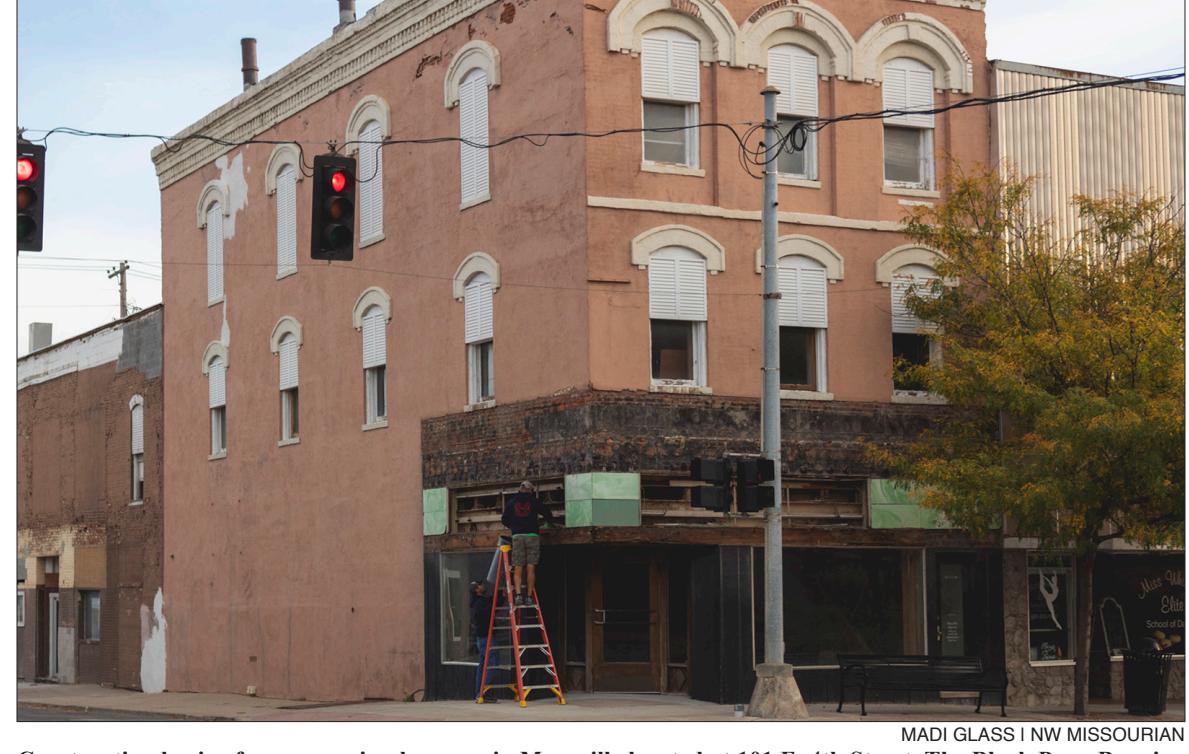
Small business, though, was not a new avenue for the owners and partners in Four Horsemen Properties LLC. Campbell also owns Blue Willow Boutique, a local business that opened a second location in St. Joseph, Missouri, a year ago, and White Elm Mercantile, another brand new business for Maryville that will open its doors Oct. 15.

Investing in both a brewery and an independent retail store during an economic struggle, Campbell said some of her peers questioned her, wondering if it made financial sense.

"Most people think I'm crazy, and I'm not sure I'm not," Campbell said through a chuckle.

But for everyone sharing part ownership of the brewery, it ended up making more sense than turning down an opportunity to enrich the Maryville community.

The owners of Black Pony



Construction begins for a new microbrewery in Maryville located at 101 E. 4th Street. The Black Pony Brewing Company aims to be ready for operation in April 2021.

Brewing Company have more to gain from their new business than money; Campbell said building up the community was their primary goal when decision making.

Several Maryville City Council members showed their support of the microbrewery on social media following the Oct. 12 meeting. City Councilman Tye Parsons took to Facebook and said the project was exciting to see, congratulating those involved.

The owners operate under the name Four Horsemen LLC and went on to name the brewery Black Pony Brewing Company in respect to the long history of race horse ties in the Maryville community.

"Rather than it being another University-themed thing, we wanted to kind of play on some of

the other historical ties and significance we have in this community," Campbell said. "A lot of people don't know about the horses side of it, but it's prominent."

It took the owners months to develop the name, but it eventually morphed into "Black Pony Brewing." The theme of horses will continue as the company operates, as naming beers in accordance to that theme is a goal.

The small business will see generous tax incentive, with 100% tax abatement for the first 10 years and up to 50% for the following 15 years on property at their location.

This was passed through the state of Missouri's Chapter 353 Program through the city, which incentivizes redevelopment of areas considered "blighted" areas.

City Councilwoman Rachael Martin said at the Oct. 12 City Council meeting that in the climate of COVID-19, and she is excited about the project.

"This is a very clear positive for the whole community," Martin said.

Reflecting the same sense of gratitude back to the city council, mayor, and various other staff, Campbell repeated herself a few times reiterating that opportunities like Black Pony Brewing is why she loves to call Maryville home.

"We are really fortunate to have both a city council and a city manager who are progressive," Campbell said. "They've really led a strong charge on understanding downtown as the heart of our community."

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District continues meal program

SIDNEY LOWRY
Missourian Reporter | @sidney_lowry

Maryville R-II School District is offering free breakfast and lunch to all children in the community ages 1-18.

Due to changes in school that have been brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Seamless Summer Option has been extended by the U.S. Department of Agriculture until Dec. 31, using Congressionally appropriated funds.

This allows any child in the district, regardless if they go to school or not, to have the opportunity for a free breakfast and lunch.

Before approval of the SSO, in the first eight days of September, the district was using the National School Lunch Program and was reimbursed \$10,534.50. After being approved, the SSO program started in the district Sept. 14.

For the remaining 12 days of the month, the district claimed 8,110 lunches and 1,646 breakfasts for \$34,006.83, more than tripling the money they received from the preceding eight school days.

Assistant Superintendent Steve Klotz manages the food service program for the school district and submits claims for reimbursement of meals given to students.

"We started the month with the NSLP because you have students who qualify for free lunch, reduced

lunch and those who pay full price," Klotz said. "When we claimed each month there was a certain level of reimbursement for a free meal, reduced meal and for a full-priced meal. With this current SSO, every student is being claimed as free with a full reimbursement."

Students at the Elementary and middle school level go to school five days a week and are offered the opportunity to now have both a free breakfast and lunch while they are at school during the day.

Students at the high school attend hybrid classes, so on the days they go to classes in person, they pick up their meals for the upcoming day from 2:45-3:30 p.m. after school ends. With every meal students take during these in-person classes or hybrid classes, they are claimed as a free meal from the district.

"I think it's a great opportunity that we are able to provide to our community and our student population, but I would like to see more community members who have children who are not school age or do not attend our school, taking advantage of the change to get this food," Klotz said.

The Cafe to Go is served Monday through Thursday to any member of the community for children ages 1-18 on the west side of Maryville High School between 8:15 a.m. and 9:15 a.m. If someone



MADI GLASS | NW MISSOURIAN

Maryville R-II School District is offering free breakfast and lunch for children ages 1-18 within the district. The Cafe to Go is available Monday through Thursday between 8:15 a.m. and 9:15 a.m. at Maryville High School.

plans on picking up meals for more than three people, they can ask for more meals in an email ahead of time at cafetogo@maryviller2.com, so they can have it prepared in time.

"The State of Missouri and the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education put out information in early September that the USDA was making funds available to states to encourage local

districts to provide this opportunity for students. Last spring when we shut down school in the middle of March the USDA made this program available so that we could feed students that were not attending school. They recognize that for many students the food service program is an excellent opportunity for them to receive a healthy and nutritious breakfast and lunch. The

USDA made money available to states, then states encouraged districts to apply to participate in this program, so we as a district filled out the appropriate applications and materials for the state of Missouri in order to operate this program.

FULL STORY ONLINE:
NWMISSOURINEWS.COM



ADDALYNN BRADBURY | NW MISSOURIAN
Jim Obergefell speaks to the crowd Oct. 13 at the Ron Houston Center for the Performing Arts. Obergefell was the plaintiff whose case in 2015 guaranteed the right to same-sex marriage for all Americans.

Lead plaintiff in Supreme Court case shares story

SAMANTHA COLLISION
News Reporter | @sammiecollision

Before Jim Obergefell's partner of 19 years was diagnosed with ALS, he didn't anticipate leaving behind his previous life to be an activist, and he definitely did not expect to have his name associated with a historic moment for LGBTQ+ rights.

While he considers his first step into activism to be an accident, every mile of that journey since has been wholly intentional.

Originally scheduled to come to campus in March but delayed because of COVID-19, Obergefell spoke at Northwest Oct. 13 with the intention of sharing a story of love, loss and hope. However, recent statements from two Supreme Court justices suggesting the court overturn the case he gave up his career for imbued more of a fighting spirit into his story.

Obergefell was the lead plaintiff in Obergefell v. Hodges, the landmark civil rights case that legalized same-sex marriage nationwide in 2015. Late Justice Ruth Bader Ginsberg was a part of the majority in the 5-4 decision, and while the judge who may fill her shoes refuses to say where her vote would fall if a case that would overturn the 2015 decision came before her, Amy Coney-Barrett's use of the term "sexual preference" raised the hackles of LGBTQ+ rights activists like Obergefell.

Though Coney-Barrett later apologized for using the term, activists are still on edge since Oct. 5. Supreme Court Justice Clarence

Thomas wrote on behalf of himself and Justice Samuel Alito in a statement regarding the court's refusal to hear a case brought forward by Kim Davis that Obergefell v. Hodges has caused "ruinous consequences for religious liberty" and should be overturned.

Davis, a former county clerk in Kentucky, was sued for refusing to issue marriage licenses to same-sex couples and petitioned the Supreme Court to hear her case, which it refused.

"I have some news for Ms. Barrett: it is not sexual preference because that implies a choice," Obergefell said in his opening remarks. "There is no choice for our sexual orientation or gender identity; it just is. ... I didn't prefer to love John. I simply fell in love with John, almost as if I was born to do it."

Obergefell, the youngest of six children in a Catholic household, said he was fortunate to be accepted by his family when he came out while attending graduate school. However, the shame and fear surrounding his sexuality that was omnipresent for him in Cincinnati, Ohio, during and shortly after the AIDS crisis, nearly kept him from dating and later marrying John Arthur.

In his years seeking his undergraduate degree, he first met Arthur at a bar, drinking a gin and tonic, and the two parted ways. They met again at the same bar over the same drink years later, but Arthur did not ask him out.

"We didn't fall in love at first

sight," Obergefell said. "We fell in love at third sight."

The two reconnected at a New Year's party a couple months later, and from then on, they were together for 19 years, until one day, Arthur started walking heavily on one foot. A whirlwind of doctor's visits and tests later, Arthur was diagnosed with ALS, also known as Lou Gehrig's disease, for which there is no cure.

Over the course of two years, Arthur lost more and more mobility until he was entirely bedridden. Unable to bear sending Arthur into hospice care, Obergefell became Arthur's full-time caregiver.

The Supreme Court ruled June 23, 2013, in United States v. Windsor that the Defense of Marriage Act was unconstitutional. That same day, Obergefell and Arthur decided to get married.

Though they had always wanted to get married, Obergefell said they refused to have a marriage in symbolism only. They wanted it to come with all the protections and recognition that opposite-sex marriages received.

The pair married July 11, 2013, in a chartered medical jet on the tarmac in Maryland. Five days later, attorney Al Gerhardstein pointed out to Obergefell that although they were married, the state of Ohio would not recognize their marriage and Arthur's death certificate would indicate that he was never married. Three days later, the two sued the state of Ohio.

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★★★ELECTION 2020

County sees absentee voting surge

MADELINNE MAPES
News Reporter | @MadelineDMapes

Although mail-in ballots have proven useful for many, few Nodaway County citizens have requested them compared to absentee ballots.

According to statistics from the Nodaway County Circuit Clerk's office, as of Oct. 7, 39 mail-in ballots have been requested out of 883 ballots solicited for either absentee, mail-in or walk-in voting.

Of those 39 requested ballots, 14 have been returned. These numbers, however, are subject to change as the deadline for requesting mail-in ballots arrives on Oct. 21.

Additionally, there have been 582 absentee ballots requested and 344 of those ballots have been returned.

County Clerk Melinda Patton and her office gathered the number of people requesting, the number of sent out and number of returned mail-in ballots.

The number of mail-in ballots in all of these categories is relatively low in comparison to other forms of voting.

"A mail-in is what anybody can request who, essentially, doesn't want to go to the polls on Election Day but has no absentee reason to vote absentee," Patton said.

Patton and her office are in charge of organizing and running elections. She said this year has been extremely busy because she has had to put to-

gether four different elections.

The number of absentee ballots is also subject to change as the presidential election draws closer.

Patton said she has the absentee ballots categorized as "permanent," "COVID-19" or "other." Permanent absentee voters are people who are not capable of getting to the polls because of age or disability.

People concerned about contracting the coronavirus can use this excuse to request an absentee ballot.

Patton explained that she was not obligated to keep track of how many people request an absentee ballot because of COVID-19, but she wanted to anyway.

According to statistics provided by the Patton's office, 264 absentee ballots have been requested marking the COVID-19 excuse, and 179 of those have been returned to the office.

"The reason I'm keeping track of that is that I kind of want to see how many people are using that as a reason to vote absentee," Patton said.

She noted that this was mostly out of her curiosity since the way elections are run changed when it became obvious the pandemic would continue through the elections.

The last category for requesting an absentee ballot is "other," which can be checked if someone is working on Election Day, can't be there

for religious reasons or for any other excuse that may not be listed as the seven main excuses provided on the application of the absentee ballot application.

Although absentee ballots are used more so than mail-in ballots, freshman digital media major Olivia Bradshaw requested and voted with a mail-in ballot.

Bradshaw said she requested a ballot the week of Sept. 21 but just submitted her ballot the week of Oct. 5. She said that she got her signature notarized at the International Involvement Center in the B.D. Owens Library.

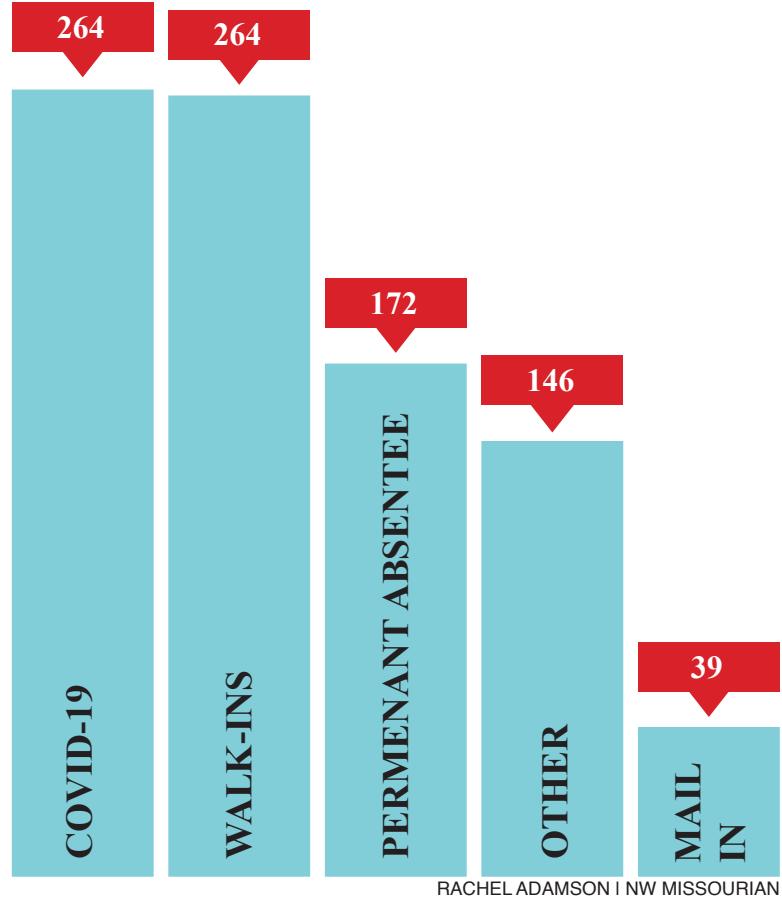
"I think you can trust it and it's safe," Bradshaw said. "I heard from others that it is safe and you should still do it."

Although Bradshaw noted that she had problems with her voter registration and receiving her ballot in the mail, she still advocated for people to vote with a mail-in ballot.

Patton said there are many locations across the community including the county clerk's office, the Greater Maryville Chamber of Commerce, the Maryville Public Library and any of the banks in the community.

Patton expects to see several requests for ballots and the rush of returned ballots as the deadline for requesting mail-in ballots draws closer.

883 ballots were requested in Nodaway County. Of those, 620 ballots were returned. Here's how the requests break down.



RACHEL ADAMSON | NW MISSOURIAN

COVID cases rising again at Northwest, in county

ANDREW WEGLEY
Managing Editor | @andrewwegley

When he answered the phone at the Nodaway County Health Department Oct. 14, Tom Patterson, who is rarely the department employee to greet callers on the other line, had not yet collected his thoughts.

The department's administrator has watched the pace of new COVID-19 cases in the county continue to uptick over the last several weeks, and a day before he answered the phone call, his department posted a press release with grim new findings: 34 county residents tested positive for the virus Oct. 12, the highest single-day total since late August.

It wasn't that long ago when Patterson, always optimistic, said the county seemed to be "turning a corner" as COVID-19 cases continued to fall. The seven-day rolling average for new cases in the county dropped down to around five, where it stayed for much of mid-September. The active case count in Nodaway County dropped as low as 50 Sept. 22. The count among Northwest staff and students, which drove the surge of cases in the county in late August, hit a

semester-long low of seven active cases in early October.

But now, every figure measuring the pandemic's grasp on Nodaway County is trending upward again, leaving Patterson and the health department flustered, dealing with the latest rise in cases they hoped to avoid.

"If I'm all over the place it's because the cases are kind of all over," Patterson said. "That's really what it is — I really don't have a good idea, other than maybe we're just, you know, getting a little weary. It's getting a little long in this. I don't know."

Patterson said the rising number of cases, which have continued to increase for much of the last few weeks, could be attributed in part to a sort of COVID-19 fatigue. Residents, he said, could be growing complacent in following the mitigation efforts in place, now seven full months into the pandemic and two months removed from when Maryville City Council first passed the local mask ordinance.

And the relaxation of mitigation seems to be affecting every age group in the county now, after cases first started to rise in adults over



GRACE ELROD | NW MISSOURIAN

Northwest student Warren Birech continues to take COVID-19 precautions, wearing his mask on campus as he travels from class to class.

the age of 30 two weeks ago. In the last week, the county has seen positive cases in every age group, from the 0-9 age group to 90-99.

The active case count in Nodaway County has ballooned from 57 cases three weeks ago to 131

cases Oct. 14 — the latest available data at the time of publication. The seven-day rolling average in the county has more than doubled in the same time frame, sitting at 14.14 now. And cases at the University, where the virus was nearly eradicated among the student pop-

ulation two weeks ago, has risen slightly again, totaling 29 active cases Oct. 14.

"Unfortunately after cases went down as we settled into the fall, maybe people did get a little complacent," Northwest Communication Manager Mark Hornickel said in a phone call Oct. 14. "But, as a University, our message hasn't changed. We're still asking students and employees to follow the mitigation measures and be mindful of the effects of the virus on those around us."

With more than a month left in Northwest's on-ground, in-person semester, which is set to end Nov. 24, Hornickel emphasized that the University still isn't yet out of the woods, with the threat of a COVID-19 outbreak always looming.

Hornickel said the University could be forced to scale back on in-person events after hosting some in-person activities, including a scaled-down Homecoming parade, over the last several weeks. There are no imminent plans to cancel any scheduled events, though, he said.

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CRIME LOG

for the week of Oct. 15

Northwest Missouri State University Police Department

Oct. 11

There was a closed investigation for five liquor law violations at Perrin Hall.

Oct. 10

There is an open investigation for stealing at Lot 41.

Oct. 9

There was a closed investigation for a liquor law violation at Franken Hall.

Maryville Department of Public Safety

Oct. 11

A summons was issued to **Dalton R.C. McDonell**, 18, of Easton, Missouri, for minor in possession on the 300 block of North Market Street.

A summons was issued to **Javon M. Williams**, 20, of Kansas City, Missouri, for careless and imprudent driving and excessive acceleration on the 500 block of North Buchanan Street.

Oct. 10

A summons was issued to **Mitchell D. Lamar**, 20, for minor in possession on the 100 block of West Seventh Street.

Oct. 9

A summons was issued to **Emily M. Boyd**, 17, of Kearney, Missouri, and **Kennedy G. Corte**, 20, of Kansas City, Missouri, for minor in possession and **Hannah L. Gray**, 19, for minor in possession, possession of a fake I.D. and having an open container on the 300 block of North Market Street.

A summons was issued to **Robert W. Hutton**, 21, for driving while intoxicated and careless and imprudent driving on the 400 block of North Walnut Street.

Oct. 8

A summons was issued to **Logan R. Stickler**, 22, of Skidmore, Missouri, for failure to maintain financial responsibility and speeding on the 200 block of West South Avenue.



RACHEL ADAMSON | NW MISSOURIAN
Active Minds represented its organization in the Homecoming parade Oct. 9. The next day the organization teamed up with Psi Chi and the Behavioral Sciences Association Oct. 10 to host a walk for mental health awareness.

Active Minds hosts awareness walk

WESLEY MILLER
News Reporter | @Wesleymiller360

The Northwest Active Minds organization teamed up with Psi Chi and the Behavioral Sciences Association Oct. 10 to walk for mental health awareness.

The three groups met at the Fine Arts Building on campus and walked the 3.1-mile Bearcat trail together. The event aimed to allow participants to share their own stories, as well as have an open, friendly discussion about mental health.

Brooke Christianson, junior and co-event coordinator for Active Minds, said she hopes the walk will motivate people to speak up when they see others struggling.

"We hope the walk gives students the opportunity to freely participate in conversations about mental health and to erase the stigma that surrounds tough discussions with mental health," Christianson said.

Cayla Vertreece, junior and president of Active Minds, also said that events like these would hopefully break the stigma around mental illness and create an open and safe environment for people to have discussions.

Vertreece said that a walk as the center of the event is to emphasize how physical health goes with mental health.

"Your mental health is just as important as your physical health," Vertreece said.

Vertreece said the group of students provided a sense of solidarity and that it was nice to be surrounded by people with the same goals and ideals.

Adam Stricker, senior and president of Psi Chi, said he believed it is really about having a strong support system.

After Active Minds paired up with Psi Chi for a movie night last year, they decided to work together again for this event.

"We paired up with Psi Chi and

“Your mental health is just as important as your physical health.”

-CAYLA VERTREECE

the Behavioral Sciences Association because we share similar ideals and would love to get as many people involved as possible," Christianson said.

Due to COVID-19, Christianson said they ran into conflicts when setting up the event.

After considering what would work to keep everyone safe and social distant, they decided that a walk was the best and safest option.

The walk was beneficial to orga-

nizers because it was set up to allow for virtual participation, which is especially important right now.

"They can walk at home, walk at the gym, walk with us around campus or even just support mental health via social media. It's also really beneficial to mental health because it's a good way to practice self-care," Christianson said.

Christianson said the group followed the University's mitigation policies and added a few precautions of their own.

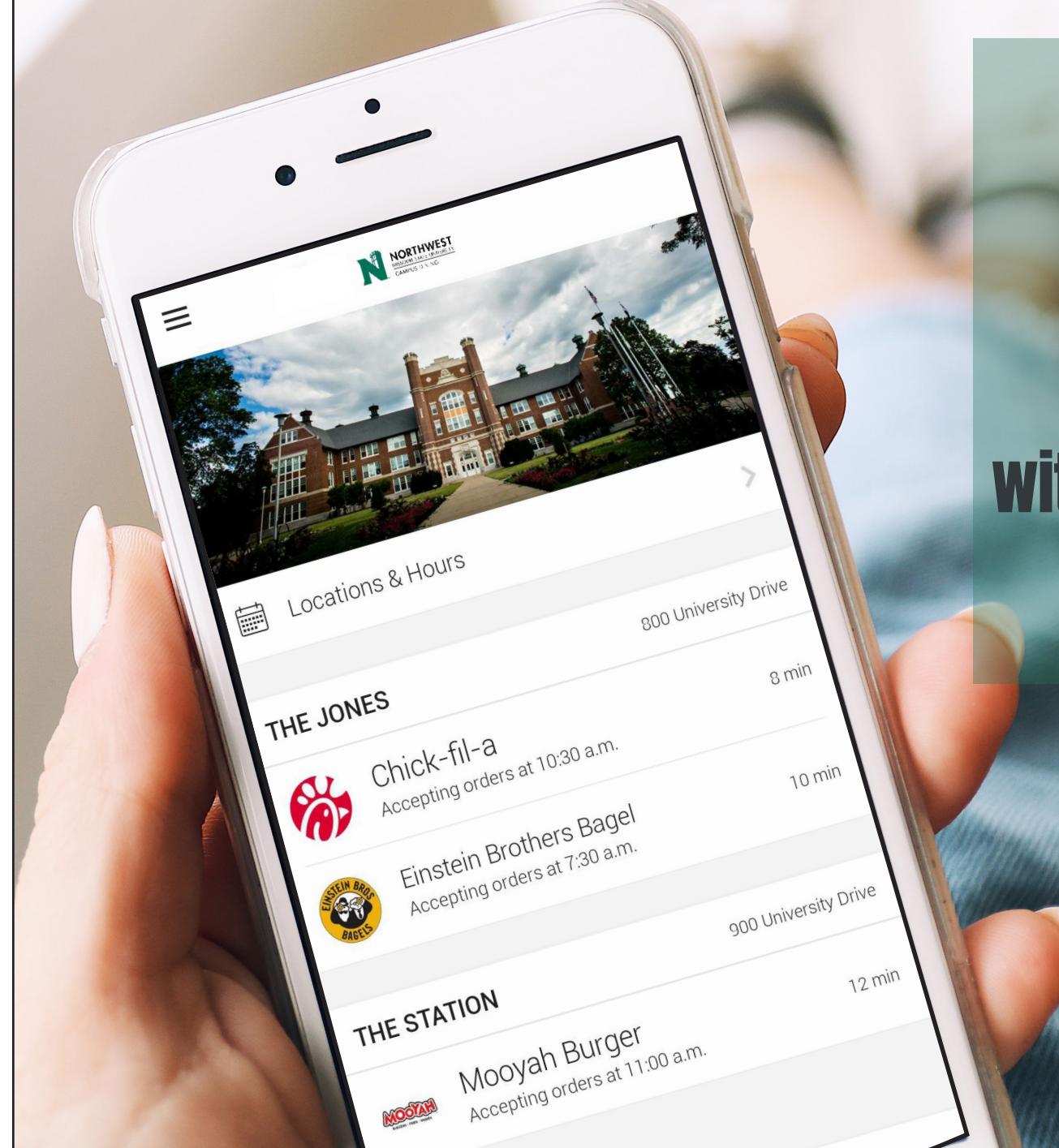
Masks were mandatory for all participants to ensure their safety. As an extra step of precaution, they split up into two groups in order to have less people around each other at one time.

This event was planned in order to participate on World Mental Health Day. The National Alliance of Mental Illness holds multiple events on this day, which includes the hope walk that Active Minds hosted.



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STUDENT TEACHING DURING COVID-19



GRACE ELROD | NW MISSOURIAN

Starting this year, Northwest's student teaching program shifted from a semester-long model to a full-school-year model to set them apart from other potential teaching candidates.

Education majors dive into craft amid global pandemic

ABIGAIL STARR
News Reporter | @abbeystarr5

With numerous social distancing measures in place, hundreds of thousands of kids are missing out on what they know as school, being taught a new way of learning. It's now up to teachers to fill students' days with enriching material without compromising their safety.

Education majors in their final year at Northwest worked all summer to prepare themselves for what the classroom would look like following a nationwide shut down and thousands of students without routines.

This year's seniors entered the education program when Northwest established the practice of a full school year of student teaching instead of one semester.

Gregory Rich is an assistant professor in the school of education and director of field experiences, meaning he assists in facilitating the student teaching experience for elementary education majors at Northwest.

After 30 years of time, effort and energy invested in public schools, Rich became a Bearcat with the goal of helping to build future teachers. Rich said the full year of experience sets Bearcat teaching candidates apart from others.

Rich remembers how unprepared the school of education was when Missouri schools were closed in April. Since then, he's worked with other educators in the state to create a plan to maximize the experience of future teachers. This led to the creation of TRIADS. A student teacher, university specialist and cooperating teacher — the classroom teacher — work together to prepare student teachers for what to expect in COVID-19 classrooms. This allows for faster problem-solving and more solutions to be shared with other schools.

There are over 100 teacher candidates through Northwest working across 80 school districts in four states this year. Rich commended those districts on their willingness to accept student teachers despite regulations to limit the number of people in the building.

Troy Dunn, principal at Minnie Cline Elementary School in Savannah, Missouri, said Northwest student teachers have so much to bring to the table to keep students safe and on-track.

"I don't know where we'd be without their ability to take the right level of initiative and keep building powerful relationships with students," Dunn said.

Northwest senior and student teacher Taylor Arthur is a member of the Minnie Cline faculty. The school has had as many as 33 stu-

dents or teachers in quarantine at a time. Dunn has noticed the unique rapport Arthur and her cooperating teacher have created. Dunn said Arthur's cooperating teacher can inspire the students to complete any task despite the unique environment children are in.

Arthur said her ability to fill multiple roles allows her to prioritize student's emotional well-being over curriculum.

"Some days I'm a social worker, a janitor, a friend, a mom, a counselor," Arthur said. "You have to build data on what they're achieving."

Arthur is a member of Northwest's Zeta Lambda chapter of Phi Mu, student teaching full time with a part-time job and assignments due weekly.

She commutes an hour a day to Minnie Cline Elementary, teaching 22 students for seven hours a day with no breaks for lunch or recess, as students eat in the classroom now. Many schools Northwest seniors teach at cohort their rooms, meaning classes never interact with designated lunch and recess times. Minnie Cline has fenced off areas of their playground to maintain distance.

Dozens of schools across the state are following the same mitigation efforts: washing hands often, social distancing both indoors and outdoors, wearing a mask and staying home when sick.

As of Oct. 11, 382,679 school-age children have contracted COVID-19, with 82 deaths since February. Cases are down from July but still concerning to parents and educators. Dunn said educating himself, his staff and his students has been the key to keeping numbers down.

"It's important reinforcing the importance and taking the professional responsibility to wash your hands and distance when you're even around faculty and always wear your mask," Dunn said.

Northwest senior Madison Young said the challenging experience of COVID-19 only reaffirmed her decision to be a teacher. Young teaches first grade at Manchester Elementary School in Omaha, Nebraska. She was impressed with her school's mitigation measures, saying they did more than necessary to keep students and faculty safe. Senior education major Isabelle Garcia-Blackwell agreed.

"I came up with an idea to make the face masks personal to the kids," Garcia-Blackwell said. "Each of them took turns saying who they wear their masks for. They would say family members, friends, one said 'the world.'"

Assistant professor Travis Dimmitt said this ability is what sets Bearcat teaching candidates apart from other future educators. When freshmen enter the edu-

cation school, one of the first skills they're taught is how to manage student well-being before making lesson plans. Dimmitt said this process trains students' brains to integrate children's well-being in every step from then on.

"I see them as freshmen and then as juniors and seniors later. I noticed such a growth in confidence and an even bigger want to be in the field," Dimmitt said.

Bearcat teachers had unique ways of finding their passion for teaching. Garcia-Blackwell grew

up in a family of teachers. These people led her to get a degree in education. She's specializing in mathematics education. She now has her own passion for molding young minds.

"They say the smartest stuff," Garcia-Blackwell said. "Seeing their minds work when you rephrase something or teach them a new way to do something is amazing."

Senior Katie Allen's grandfather taught at Northwest. Her parents were Bearcats when they met. When Allen's father died the second semester of her freshman year, professors Jill Baker and Brian Swink prioritized Allen's well-being while being flexible with deadlines on her assignments. Allen recently spoke with Baker and told her without Baker's support and love she probably would probably have dropped out.

"Without both, I would probably not be on track to graduate let alone graduate with honors," Allen said. "They are irreplaceable human beings, two of Northwest's absolute gems."

The soon-to-be educators are looking forward to having their own classrooms come fall of 2021 and have hopes of an in-person graduation. The graduates will attain their master's degrees within the next few years, focusing on establishing themselves in their districts early on. Dimmitt said he hopes this group will use the unique experience they've had this year to maximize their futures in the classroom.

"Connection is still the most important thing," Dimmitt said. "Right now, teachers are trying to build an airplane as it flies. It's true commitment to the craft."

BETHANY CONLEY | NW MISSOURIAN
Senior Taylor Arthur spends time after class preparing lesson plans and engaging activities for second graders at Minnie Cline Elementary School in Savannah, Missouri.

MHS bounced in first round of districts

TRISTAN LYNCH
Missourian Reporter | @NWMSports



The Maryville softball team looks to remember the good memories as the Spoofhounds ended their season with a 12-0 loss in five innings against the Macon Tigers in the first round of the Class 3 District 8 tournament Oct. 13.

Maryville coach Chandra DeMott is proud of all her players, despite the tough loss, and hopes that none of them look to spread any blame. Along with that, she hopes the Spoofhounds celebrate all the good wins and memories of this season.

"I told them to make sure you remember the happy moments and memories of the season," DeMott said. "Make sure that is what you hold on to, especially when ending your career, and just not putting any of the blame on just one person."

In the first inning, the Spoofhounds mustered one hit via the bat of senior third basemen Morgan Wray. In the Tigers' half of the first inning, they scored four runs off of an RBI double, along with a three-run home run.

DeMott didn't panic, as her girls have been in similar positions before this season, and she reminded the team to not be worried.

"It's not the first game that we have been down," DeMott said. "Even down four runs early on and being able to come back from that and attack again, but at that point, we weren't really too concerned about it. I just told the girls to shake it off and control what they could."

The Spoofhounds continued to struggle at the plate as they finished the game with two hits and put one baserunner in scoring position.

Maryville senior catcher Briley Watkins continued to push her teammates to keep their heads up and attack every pitch.

"Just keep your head up and just give it your all," Watkins said to her teammates. "Just get the ball



ADDALYNN BRADBURY | NW MISSOURIAN

At their game against Lafayette, Maryville High School senior Shellby Copple pitches the ball. Both teams wore pink for Breast Cancer Awareness month.

into play."

The Tigers continued to dominate on offense, tallying more than 10 hits and scoring 12 runs.

The Tigers struck out once, while also having five batters walk through four innings, forcing the Spoofhounds to rotate through three different pitchers.

"Going into this game, we knew what Macon was capable of and we

really talked about leaving it all on the field tonight," DeMott said. "Going into the game, no one really expected us to win, so we were going all in and did what we could."

Despite the high number of runs, Watkins still was proud of her pitchers and knew that they did all they could to keep it a close game.

"I think they all pitched well," Watkins said. "It's just (Macon)

was getting around the ball really well and we couldn't stop them from doing that. We were just trying to change up and changed up the pitches, but all my pitchers are pretty solid, so I'm very proud of them."

In the top of the fifth, the Spoofhounds finished the game with three straight outs, effectively ending their season with a record of 6-11.

DeMott was proud of her seniors and their leadership and hoped that the underclassmen would embrace it. She also hoped her girls would never forget the family mentality.

"We go into it together and we go down together, one ship," DeMott said. "I just tried to make sure that they remember that family mentality."

FANS

CONTINUED FROM A10

The Bearcats' home debut is marked for Dec. 2 against Central Missouri, which gives Peterson more than a month to figure out who will or won't be in attendance. For now, he's trying to figure out if fans will even have to worry about having something to watch.

"The biggest intricacy is if we're gonna have games or not; that's the hardest one," Peterson said. "When it comes down to testing and contact tracing, men's and women's basketball are contact sports, so it's hard to separate if you have one positive test. ... In my opinion, it's not even the number of fans that we can get in yet; it's still trying to figure out if there's gonna be a season."

The Bearcats are scheduled to start their season Nov. 19 against Northeastern State in Tahlequah, Oklahoma. Two weeks after that, Peterson is hopeful that Bearcat Arena will have fans to welcome the men's and women's teams to the court.

"I think we'll have fans of some sort. I feel really comfortable —

Everybody wants sports. Everybody wants to see sports happen, we just gotta do our best to make sure it happens safely."

-ANDY PETERSON

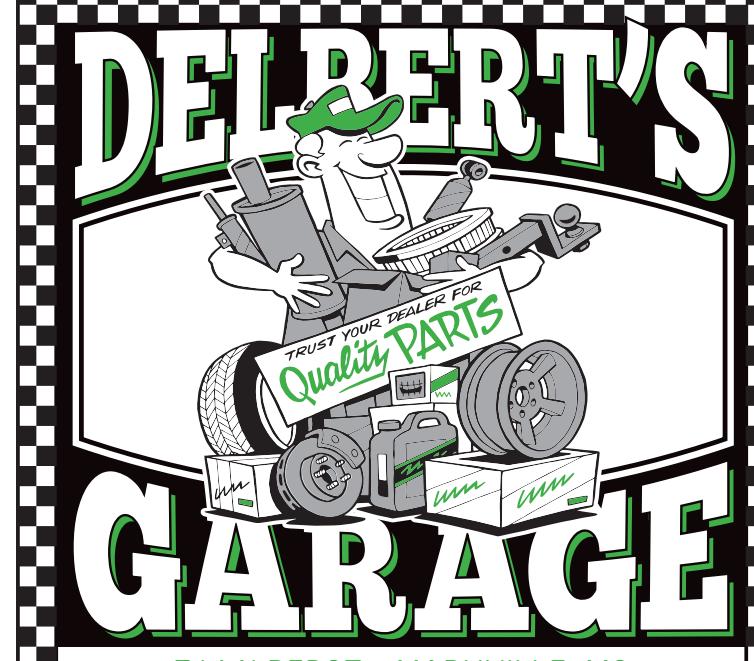
I say that now, it's only October 13th — I feel really comfortable about getting our players and staff, the people that'd usually be on their pass list, really comfortable about getting that pass list in," Peterson said.

"It's gonna be a little less than 200 people, I think, so we can do that pretty safely and easily. ... I think we're getting close to a solution on that, but I think at some

level we'll have fans at this point. Obviously, all of that could change based on what's going on."

Contrary to the beliefs of some, Peterson said people do want, and are working to get athletes back in action as soon as possible.

"Everybody wants sports," Peterson said. "Everybody wants to see sports happen, we just gotta do our best to make sure it happens safely."



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Maryville girls golf sends three to state tournament

MORGAN GUYER
Missourian Reporter | @NWMSports

Maryville girls golf qualified three golfers for the MSHSAA Class 1 State Tournament after a third place team finish at the Class 1 District 4 Tournament Oct. 12 at Mozingo Golf Course.

Golf balls began finding the various roughs and fairways around the par 72 Sechrest 18 at 9 a.m. Oct. 12. The all-day odyssey known as 18-hole golf had begun, with trips to the state tournament on the line. The windy conditions proved to be a challenge toward the already intricate course.

Freshman Caylin Auffert, senior Lauren Padgett and freshman Lauren Jaster are the three golfers who will now compete at the two-day tournament starting Oct. 19 at Paradise Pointe in Smithville, Missouri.

Auffert tied for third overall, shooting a 100. Her two pars on holes 11 and 15, which are two of the most difficult on the course, helped secure her place. She'll head into her first state tournament following an impressive freshman year as the primary low scorer for the team. She's found success at Mozingo this season, coming in first at two duels, as well as grabbing a top-10 finish in the season-opening tournament.

Padgett shot a 107 to finish tied for ninth, while Jaster shot a 115 to grab a 17th place finish. Only the top 18 players get a chance to advance to the state tournament, and Jaster finished four strokes off the cutline.

Maryville shot a 449 as a team, with freshmen Ainsly Watkins and Casey Phillips rounding out the scoring with a 127 and 129, respectively. They both finished in the top 30 to cap off the team's performance.

Coach Brenda Ricks was proud of her team for their performance.



EMILY LLOYD | NW MISSOURIAN
Maryville High School girls golf team finished third at the Class 1 District 4 Tournament Oct. 12 at Mozingo Golf Course. The teams' top three golfers qualified for the MSHSAA Class 1 State Tournament.

"I can't tell you how proud I am of the entire team," Ricks said. "It was a heartbreaker for the two that didn't make it, but they will next year."

Ricks noticed how the girls' practice work was able to translate to the course.

"The girls were able to spend some time on the range where they could try different fixes," Ricks said. "I wanted them to have as

many tools as they could to help with their course management."

Senior captain Padgett now looks forward to the last stretch of her Spoofhound career, after a season of leadership over a young team.

"With being the only senior on the team, leadership came easy to me," Padgett said. "I have had lots of experience playing for the Spoofhound golf team."

This leadership has played a vital role in the teams success, with Padgett showing many of the freshmen the ropes to carry the team in the future.

"I was able to teach some of the newcomers the practice rituals we have, such as putting drills and the right way to warm up on the range," Padgett said. "I was also able to tell the team how the courses at away matches would be, since I had played there in the past."

Padgett looks to cap off a rather impressive senior season in style, participating in her first state tournament. She has been a good performer for the team, consistently being the second lowest scorer for the Spoofhounds. She has four top 20 finishes in tournaments and has

finished second overall twice in duels at Mozingo this season.

"It was really important for me to make it to state in my final year of playing. I made it my ultimate goal to make it this far," Padgett said. "I believe state for me is the perfect ending to a great career and is the perfect beginning of a fantastic career for Caylin and Lauren."

While qualifying is an amazing accomplishment, Padgett will still be looking to compete. She knows she has areas that need improvement in order to do that.

"I need to make sure I am lined up with my target before I hit the ball, otherwise it will go completely in the wrong direction," Padgett said. "Another part of my game that needs improvement is putting. This is the most critical part of the game and is where most strokes can come from."

Ricks has a simple message for the three girls before they wrap up the season.

"I told them to go out and have fun. State is the icing on the cake," Ricks said. "The more they can relax and have fun down there, the better they will play."

Maryville QB makes choice on collegiate program

CALVIN SILVERS
Sports Reporter | @CalvinSilvers

Maryville senior quarterback Ben Walker, who suffered a season-ending knee injury Week 1 against Blair Oaks, announced his commitment to the University of Central Missouri to play football Oct. 6 via Twitter.

Walker will be on the football field for Central, but his recruitment began on the basketball court in his junior year.

"The Central Missouri recruiter found me playing basketball while he was there for another kid," Walker said. "From then on, we kept in touch."

Although Walker and the Central football staff kept in touch, Walker wasn't officially offered a scholarship until July. However, Walker said he knew he wanted to be a Mule throughout high school.

Walker felt the family atmosphere Central had to offer as coaches checked in weekly. They talked about news and events in Warrensburg, Missouri, Maryville and in Walker's life.

There were a lot more factors that made Central appealing to Walker, but mostly the rise among the ranks of the MIAA that Central has been on.

"They're an up-and-coming program, and I like where they are going," Walker said. "I just see a lot of potential in their staff and the players they have."

In 2019, Central finished 11-2, which included an undefeated record at home. Central's second loss came in the first round of the NCAA Division II Super Region Three bracket against No. 1 seed Ferris State, which effectively ended their season.

Walker elected to move away from home as opposed to playing for the hometown team. While Northwest was practically in his backyard, the Bearcats weren't involved as much in his recruiting process.

"I think UCM and I just clicked better," Walker said. "Northwest never really kept in touch with me. It really wasn't that hard of a decision to make."

Central recruited Walker as a quarterback, but standing at 6 feet 2 inches and weighing 185 pounds with a great deal of athleticism could land Walker at another position. Central coach Jim Svoboda mentioned this to Walker, he said, but didn't specify a specific position.

Walker would love to see himself as the leader for the Mule offense but wouldn't be disappointed if he was moved elsewhere.

"I just really love the game of football, and I love everything that goes into it," Walker said. "Wherever they want to put me on the field of play, I'll do that to my best ability."

The entire recruitment was a cool experience for Walker, but he said he'll never forget when he officially visited Central's campus.

Walker enjoyed seeing the Central Missouri Athletic Hall of Fame, being shown the trophies Central has racked up in previous seasons, trying on uniform combinations, looking at facilities and having a meeting with all of the coaches.

The night of Aug. 28, Walker strapped up for his last season with the Spoofhounds. During a year in which Walker wanted to continue to impress his future coaches, he instead saw his senior season end.

The season-ending injury took place at Walter Stadium in Warrensburg, Missouri, which serves as the future home for Walker. In attendance was Central staff, who witnessed their newest commit go down. Fearing the worst, the Central staff reassured Walker, telling him they will keep their scholarship promise.

"The coaches came and talked to me and my parents and said that if they wanted to watch me play my senior year and offered they would have, but they said they saw what they needed to see," Walker said. "They just jumped the gun and offered. That's really when I made up my mind that I wanted to go to UCM."

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Maryville to face Savannah on the road

CALVIN SILVERS
Sports Reporter I @CalvinSilvers

Maryville football traveled to Kansas City, Missouri, for the second time this season Oct. 9, trying to secure its first win of the season against a ranked opponent and avoid falling to a losing record.

Class 4's No. 6 Lincoln College Prep (4-2) saw Maryville (4-3) come onto its blue field with an energy not seen yet this season, and the Spoofhounds left with a crucial 49-10 win under their belt.

This week, the Spoofhounds will travel 30 minutes south on U.S. Route 71 Oct. 16 to face their rivals, the Savannah Savages (4-1).

Maryville coach Matt Webb knows the importance of this Midland Empire Conference matchup and the stigma that arises when these two teams meet.

"It's one of those things that you grow up and they're your rival just because of location," Webb said. "When you're a kid born in Maryville, you don't like the kids that grow up 30 miles down south of you from the town you don't mention. When you're in Savannah, it's the same thing."

Every year, players from Maryville and Savannah are hyped up to not only secure a win for their town, but to hoist the Highway 71 trophy in the air after the game, claiming bragging rights until next year's matchup.

Last year, the Spoofhounds won 28-14, which gave them a share of a MEC title that they eventually won outright.

Maryville senior running back Connor Weiss, who saw the end zone once against Savannah last year, loves this time of the year.

"Everybody loves Savannah week; we get to play them boys down the road and compete," Weiss said. "That 71 trophy has been with us since 2012, and we don't plan on losing that baby yet."

The Spoofhounds have outscored the Savages by a combined score of 319-73 since 2012. However, Savannah is looking to capitalize as they're rolling with the momentum they gained from their previous season.

Savannah hired Kevin Kopecky as its new head coach in the offseason. Kopecky has a prior coaching record of 188-150, and his teams have made 20 state playoff appearances, 10 state semifinals and two state runner-up finishes.

In 2019, Savannah finished 10-3, with its last loss coming in the Class 3 quarterfinals against Odessa, who went on to win the state title.

With some core players returning, Savannah has a roster filled with what Webb described as winners.

"They're very physical," Webb said. "They're a physical group on the line of scrimmage, and they'll get after you."

In the last three seasons, the Savages have found luck when playing at home. Savannah is a combined 9-3 when at home, those losses coming from Grain Valley and Maryville in 2018, and Excelsior Springs this season.

The Spoofhounds are not scared of the challenge posed by playing Savannah on the road. In fact, Maryville has played five of their seven games this year on the road.

"We're going to bring some insane Maryville Spoofhound energy and do what we have to do to prepare to beat them on their home field," Weiss said. "Last time we were there, we won 41-7 in a mud bowl. Hopefully we can repeat a score like that."

Against Lincoln College Prep last week, the Spoofhounds ignited their offense, having nine different athletes get involved in the run game, and ended with a combined total of 396 yards rushing.

To replicate that performance, Weiss knows they cannot afford a slow start and need to keep the pressure on the Savages.

"We need to get off to a quick start and just keep rolling and executing on every play we run," Weiss said. "Everyone needs to be all in so we can run a mixture of spread and wing-T like we have been and keep the defense worrying."

FULL STORY ONLINE:
NWMISSOURINEWS.COM

RECORD:	NOTABLES:
10-1	- Week 1 Loss to Fort Hays - Loss in Division II quarterfinals
9-2	- Concern at starting running back - Offensive production
10-1	- Week 5 loss to Missouri Western - Revenge win against Nebraska-Kearney
10-1	- Week 9 loss to Nebraska-Kearney - Loss in Division II quarterfinals

MAKAYLA POLAK | NW MISSOURIAN

Football's 2020 without COVID-19

JON WALKER
Sports Reporter I @ByJonWalker

Since last December, we've all been without Northwest football. I think that after some of the things the Bearcats accomplished last season, fans were excited to see the program take another step forward in 2020.

Obviously, with no MIAA season and no fall sports championships, we'll have no clue what Rich Wright and company would've done in his fourth season at the helm of the program.

A group of media members that have covered Northwest, and some that still actively do, would like to think we know exactly what this fall would've had in store for the Bearcats in a world without COVID-19. All predictions made are based on the original schedule for Northwest football, the one that excluded any coronavirus modifications. With that being said, let's begin.

Jon Walker
Northwest Missourian

It's safe to say that Northwest football's season-ending performance against Ferris State in the quarterfinals was underwhelming. In fact, Rich Wright said in August he felt like the Bearcats had the pieces in place to win that game. Perhaps that sparked a revenge tour mindset for the program.

I would've taken the Bearcats to finish 10-1 on their original schedule, including a loss to Fort Hays to start the season. It would've sent Bearcat Nation into a frenzy, but prematurely.

The program welcomed a new offensive coordinator, lost focal

points on both sides of the ball and would've had to make a six-hour trek to Hays, Kansas, to play another historic program in the MIAA. It'd be unrealistic to expect everything to go accordingly with all of the new variables in Week 1.

Notable wins would've included the Week 3 matchup with Central Missouri in Warrensburg, Missouri, in which the Bearcats' offense would've clicked and blew out the Mules. Along with that, I would've taken the Bearcats to get revenge on Nebraska-Kearney in Week 9 at Bearcat Stadium.

After the departure of senior running backs Justin Rankin and Isaiah Strayhorn, the uncertainties at running back would've been something to watch for. Along with that, Braden Wright would've been without veteran tight end Marqus Andrews for the first time in his career. But, the Bearcats would have a now seasoned dual-threat quarterback, along with senior wideout Imoni Donadelle and junior receiver LaTroy Harper as weapons on the outside. Of course, people can't forget about senior slot receiver Alec Tatum either.

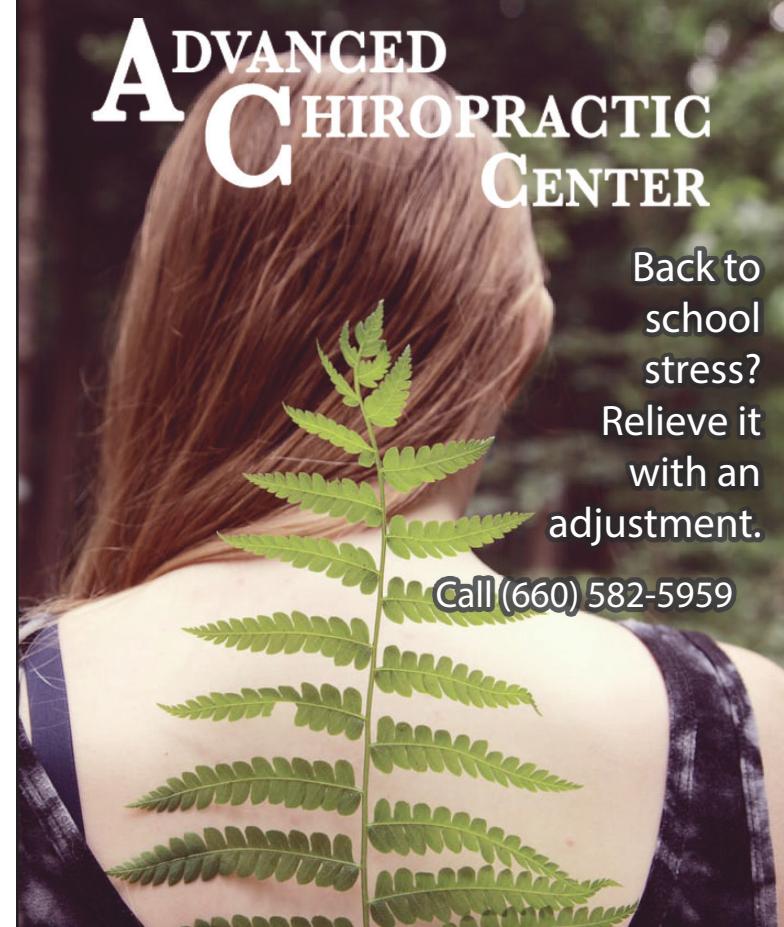
Defensively, it's a secondary that lost standout cornerback Chama Pierre, and cornerback J'Ravien Anderson would've seen his first game action since being injured last season. Although, senior defensive lineman Sam Roberts is getting some attention from NFL scouts, but anyone that watched him tear through offensive lines last year would've guessed he'd be a strong spot for the Bearcats' defense.

I would've taken the odds on the

Bearcats to win another share of the MIAA, along with having the opportunity to host another playoff game in Bearcat Stadium. Rich Wright has taken one step further into the postseason all three of his years with the program, but that would've changed this year. They get back to the quarterfinals, but the uncertainties on offense leave me with a question mark instead of an exclamation point.

READ MORE ONLINE

A full version of this story with more predictions of what Northwest football would have done this year is available online at NWMISSOURINEWS.COM



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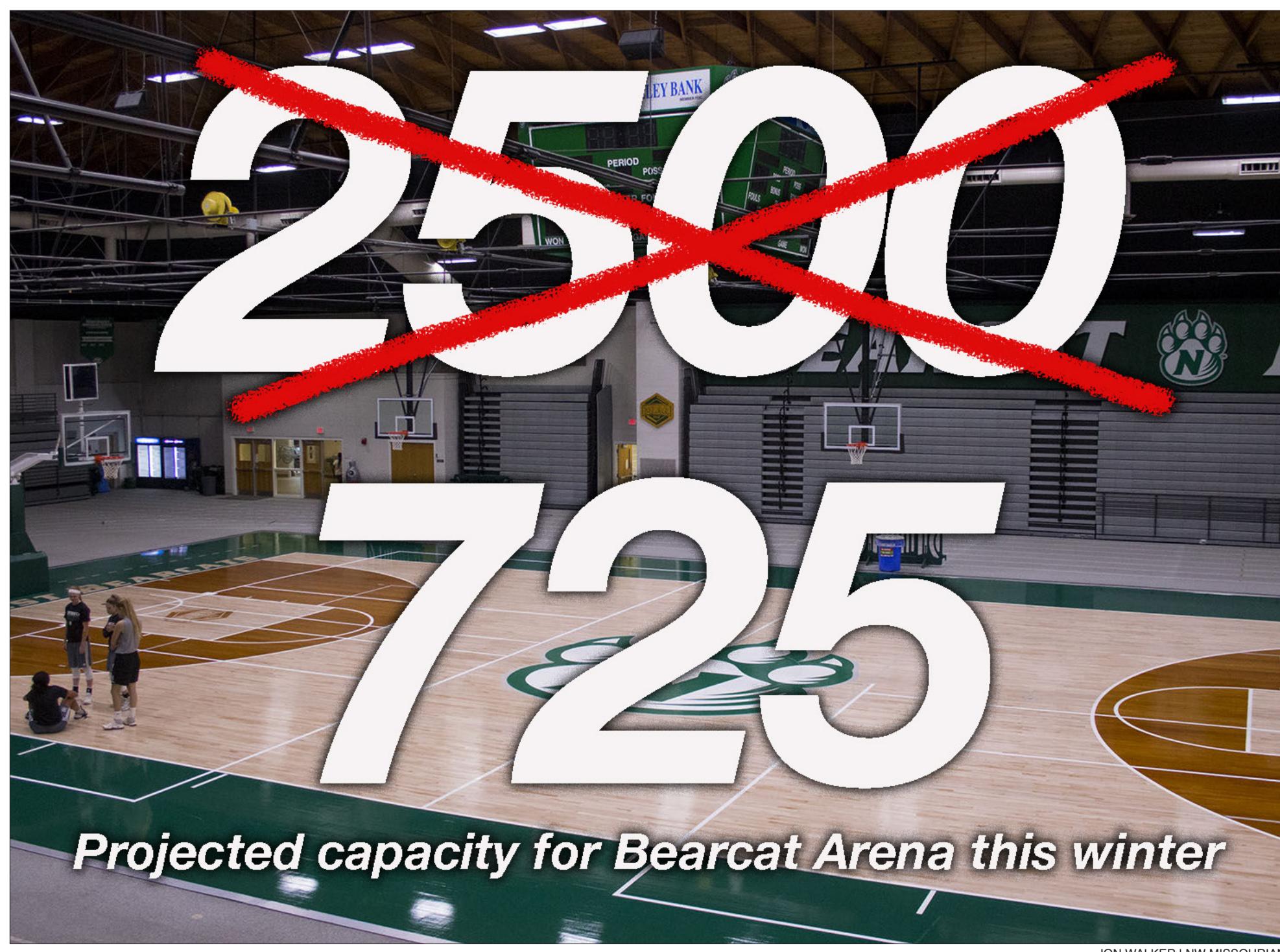
Oct. 15, 2020 | @NWMSports

One and done

MHS softball ends season after loss in first round.
see A7

MEC mania

MHS football chases MEC title down home stretch of season
see A9



JON WALKER | NW MISSOURIAN

Northwest Athletics hopes for 30% capacity during basketball

JON WALKER
Sports Editor | @ByJonWalker

The MIAA announced Oct. 1 that winter sports had the green light to move forward as regularly scheduled, with official practices starting Oct. 15 and games for men's and women's basketball starting Nov. 18-19.



Northwest Director of Athletics Andy Peterson has faced an abundance of decisions to make regarding Northwest sports for the 2020-21 school year. After the MIAA's announcement, Peterson is trying to figure out who, if anyone, will get to watch games in Bearcat Arena this winter.

"I guess it made it sound like we were gonna let season ticket holders in over anyone else, which is just not the case," Peterson said about a Northwest Athletics press release. "We're gonna take care of our student-athletes and their families first, and then a couple of other groups. ... So, it's really just — right now, it's coming up with the capacity. What's our number? How do we get there? And what's the safest way to get there without splitting hairs and busting up different infinity groups by location or price point

or whatever that might be? We don't really wanna get to that point."

Peterson's confusion stems from comments on the Northwest Athletics Facebook page, specifically on the post that announced the University was surveying season ticket holders to gauge interest in possibly attending games this year.

Those comments suggested that only season ticket holders would be able to attend. However, Peterson said, that's not the case.

It isn't a decision that he'll make alone. Instead, it's one that he'll couple with 13 other athletic directors to make, and then some.

"We do feel like we need to be as similar as possible across the 14 institutions when it comes to letting visitor fans, not letting visitor fans in — band, cheer, dance team, masks, no masks, all that stuff," Peterson said about the MIAA coming together to make a uniform choice. "I mean, you've got 14 different counties. Most of the time, the county health departments are the ones that are managing the coronavirus mitigation strategies and whatnot. You've got four different states with four different governors."

The exact number of fans allowed in each venue could vary, Peterson said. It isn't some-

thing that could be exactly uniform across the league due to the simple fact that each institution's circumstances could differ. The way that Central Missouri in Warrensburg, Missouri, handles its fans isn't going to be the same as Newman in Wichita, Kansas.

Even then, the way that Northwest handles fans in Maryville could vastly differ from the manner in which Missouri Western handles fans 45 minutes down the road.

"If we socially distance, the formula is about 28 or 29% capacity, is about how many people you could have in," Peterson said. "We're working off of that number and just trying to figure out how many butts in seats that actually is. I know for a fact that two of our sister institutions that have said through January 1st, no fans at all. ... It's a challenge, but it's something we'll just have to keep working through."

The Northwest Athletics website says the capacity for Bearcat Arena sits at 2,500 people. If that's the case, the 29% Peterson mentioned would allow roughly 725 spectators to attend games.

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Northwest XC halts training amid positive COVID-19 tests

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Northwest cross country is set to compete in a makeshift MIAA meet Oct. 30 in Wichita, Kansas, but more than half of the men's team is in quarantine due to COVID-19.

As of last week, two runners on the men's team tested positive for the coronavirus. This put most of the team in quarantine because many of them live together and interact with one another.

Some of the team has been in quarantine before, but with less than three weeks until the meet, the Bearcats could face some personnel issues.

"I think they'll be ready," Northwest coach Nick Gibson said about the men. "Everyone spent months of quarantining before and came

back in really good shape, so two weeks will be nothing."

Gibson has had a training regimen set for the team since school started, and the guys buy into his program. The team holds each other accountable, which allows for the runners to make sure everyone is staying safe.

Senior Tucker Dahle and junior Jake Norris are roommates, and quarantine has forced them to take a break from training. Their whole house is on the team, leaving them and their roommates with nothing to do for two weeks.

"I don't think this will do us any harm," Dahle said. "The guys hold each other accountable, and we will be ready to go when we can get out."

The team has roughly a week left in quarantine, they will jump right back into training for their outing in Wichita.

"We are released on the 20th to go back to full practice and school," Dahle said.

Cross country is considered a low-risk sport to contract COVID-19, according to the NCAA. The Bearcats felt like they had done a good job of staying safe up until the outbreak. Aside from going to classes and being around other students, the runners have kept to themselves, training for the upcoming meet and track and field in the spring.

"We have done a good job of staying safe, because we try not to go and do things," Norris said. "We focus on our running as much as we can so we can compete at our highest level."

Once the runners are out of quarantine, they will jump right back into training for their outing in Wichita.



Jake Norris (right), a junior cross country athlete, runs with his teammates at practice in Bearcat Stadium every day. The team prepares for its upcoming meet Oct. 30, but is unable to train together due to a few athletes testing positive for COVID-19.

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